

Deuteronomy 31:9 - 32:5 - Thursday, January 12th, 2012

(9) So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. (10) And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, (11) when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. (12) Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, (13) and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

- Moses tells them that at the Feast of Tabernacles, all the Israelites, and even the strangers, were to gather for the public reading of God's Word.
- It's interesting to notice that if they first hear, then they will learn to fear the Lord. Faith in the Lord comes vis-à-vis hearing the Word of the Lord.

Romans 10:17 NKJV So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

(14) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. (15) Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle. (16) And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. (17) Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?' (18) And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

- How sad is this? Basically, God is telling him that the Israelites will ultimately turn away from Him and serve the gods of the foreigners instead.
- After all Moses has been through, he now has God tell him not only this, but that the days are now approaching when he himself must die.
- It's for this reason that he has Moses "inaugurate" Joshua who would become his successor as the one who leads the Israelites into the land.

(19) "Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. (20) When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. (21) Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them*." (22) Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.

- I find it interesting that God has Moses write down a song so as to teach it to the children of Israel as a witness against the children of Israel.
- While we will learn this song in the next chapter, I think there's an important "why" behind the "what" of this song found here in this chapter.
- I'm of the belief that putting words to music enables us to remember more by virtue of how God made and wired our minds to process things.

(23) Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you." (24) So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, (25) that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: (26) "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; (27) for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?

- This passage is a matter of record in that the Israelites would place a finished copy of the law in the temple next to the Ark of the Covenant.
- Also, It's important to note how that both Moses and Joshua are quick to obey all that God is commanding them to do actually on that very day.
- Moses puts the words to song on that very same day and the passage seems to indicate it wasn't many days after that Joshua is inaugurated.

(28) Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. (29) For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." (30) Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

- It's thought that this reference to the latter days could very well find it's final fulfillment in, during and at the end of the seven-year tribulation.
- I suppose if you think about it that would make sense because it would become that last time that Israel turns from God before they're saved.
- This chapter ends with an introduction of sorts to the next chapter, which has the song lyrics that would ultimately be a witness against them.

Deuteronomy 32:1-5 (1) "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. (2) Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass. (3) For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. (4) *He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect; For all His ways *are* justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright *is* He.

- The imagery God has Moses use in writing the words to this song is really quite striking; namely, by likening it unto raindrops, dew and showers.
- By doing this, in this way, he paints a vivid picture on the canvass of the mind, and in so doing enables us to associate a truth with that image.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a brief moment, because there's something here that I would like to share with you about our imagination.

- Now, in order to do this, I must first give you the back-story so you have a better understanding of how powerful a sanctified imagination can be.
- In the book of second Samuel chapter seventeen, we have the record of how two men advise Absalom, who is the rebellious son of King David.
- Soon after Absalom had forced his own father out of Jerusalem he turns to the advisors for counsel on what he should do about his father.

2 Samuel 17:1-5 NIV Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. (2) I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king (3) and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed." (4) This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel. (5) But Absalom said, "Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say."

- So after receiving counsel from Ahithophel, he turns to this other advisor by the name of Hushai. His advice is recorded in 2 Samuel 17:6-13.

2 Samuel 17:6-13 NIV When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, "Ahithophel has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion." (7) Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given is not good this time. (8) You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter; he will not spend the night with the troops. (9) Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place. If he should attack your troops first, whoever hears about it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.' (10) Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave. (11) "So I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba—as numerous as the sand on the seashore—be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. (12) Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. (13) If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not even a piece of it can be found."

- There are a couple of things I want to point out here, the first of which is that God gave Hushai these words so as to save King David's life.
- If the truth be known, Ahithophel's advice if heeded, would have succeeded in capturing and killing King David, which is what Ahithophel wanted.
- The reason for this is that Ahithophel was full of bitterness and never forgave David for committing adultery with his granddaughter Bathsheba.

- Be that as it may at the end of the day it was Hushai's advice that won out for one simple reason, God inspired him to appeal to the imagination.
- Like the imagery Moses uses with the Israelites so too does Hushai use imagery with Absalom namely, fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs.
- This image along with image of the bravest soldier with the heart of a lion melting in fear was one for which they would have been most familiar.

Warren Wiersbe in his fabulous book; "Preaching and Teaching with Imagination" says it better than anyone else when he writes; "Absalom heard what Ahithophel was saying, but he saw and felt what Hushai was saying. ... Hushai turned his ears into eyes so that he could see and feel the message and respond positively to it. ...Hushai used words to paint pictures, and he hung those pictures in the gallery of Absalom's mind, pictures taken from the world that both of them knew personally. Hushai didn't invent a new world, that would be imaginary, he simply used the world that he and Absalom already knew and could imagine."

- I can't get over the similarities between Moses and Hushai, especially the imagery of falling "as dew settles on the ground." They both use this!
- While Moses uses it in a song, and Hushai uses it in a speech, they both had the same effect of placing the listener into the picture they paint.
- This is the user password that enables them to log into the imagination of the listener, and it's evidenced by how it deeply affects the listener.

Again, Warren Wiersbe writes; "...In the United States in the '60's, the folks songs of the 'flower people' probably did more to influence government policy about Vietnam and civil rights than did all the speeches given in Congress. Why? Because, like Hushai's speech, these songs painted pictures and stirred the imagination. Songs such as 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' and 'Blowin' In the Wind' affected more people in a deeper way than did the press releases from the White House."

- You'll forgive my only making it to verse five, but God has used this one truth in my life in such a powerful way and in every arena of life as well.
- Before entering the ministry, an imagination brought under the control of the Holy Spirit, became an integral part of how I operated in business.
- Using this God given imagination has been invaluable in the arena of marriage and parenting and more importantly in ministry in service to God.

Of this, Oswald Chambers so eloquently wrote; "Learn to associate ideas worthy of God with all that happens in Nature – the sunrises and the sunsets, the sun and the stars, the changing seasons, and your imagination will never be at the mercy of your impulses, but will always be at the service of God."

- I'll bring tonight's Bible study in for a landing on the runway of the sermon-on-the-mount that Jesus preached associating His Word with nature.
- God's creation is a dazzling theater so arranged, there's a connection between the facts of the natural world and the truths of the spiritual world.
- This truth is also the common thread that's woven into the fabric of the greatest sermon ever preached in the world, by the Savior of the world.

Matthew 6:25-34 NIV "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? (26) Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (27) Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (28) "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. (29) Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. (30) If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (31) So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (33) But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."